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WHAT THE DUTCH HAVE
DONE IN THE WEST OF
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WHAT THE DUTCH HAVE DONE IN THE WEST OF THE UNITED STATES

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BY GEORGE FORD HUIZINGA

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A FOREWORD

In 1908 I offered a series of three prizes to the students and alumni of Hope College, at Holland, Michigan, for the most comprehensive essay on what the Dutch have done in the West of the United States: that is, west of the Allegheny Mountains, since their first emigration from the Netherlands until the present time. The judges awarded the first prize to the essay printed on the following pages. It was believed that it would be wise to permanently preserve the essay in type, since in no other convenient form can be found the facts herein given. This is the purpose of the present brochure.

EDWARD BOK

Philadelphia, 1909.

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AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In the preparation of this essay the kindly offices of so many friends and strangers alike has been of great help.

Doctor James F. Zwemer is chief among those to whom I am indebted. His reference to authorities on the subject, his suggestions, and his wide knowledge of the western Dutch, especially outside of Michigan, greatly increase whatever merit the essay may possess. Doctor Zwemer's intimate and general knowledge of all the western Dutch gained through his travels and work as an ecclesiastical and educational agent, his gift of observation, and his sound historical sense lend to the information which he so kindly placed at my disposal a peculiar authority.

For valuable advice, information, and service it is a pleasure to thank also Doctor J. H. Karsten, Reverend Jas. DePree, Doctor P. DePree, Doctor H. P. Oggel, Reverend H. Straks, Mr. J. Nollen, Professor J. B. Nykerk, Honorable C. VanLoo, D. P. DeJong, Miss Ida Trompen, Doctor J. G. Huizinga, Reverend H. Borges, John Zwemer, H. Wayenburg, B. Mulder, and the librarians of the Ryerson Library of Grand Rapids. There are many others who have helped me indirectly and often unconsciously. To all these and to whomsoever else I have failed to give special mention I own my obligation.

THE AUTHOR

WHAT THE DUTCH HAVE DONE IN THE WEST OF THE UNITED STATES

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WHAT THE DUTCH HAVE DONE IN THE WEST OF THE UNITED STATES

THE principles of religious liberty that had been proclaimed to modern Europe by The Netherlands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were during the first half of the nineteenth century so far forgotten that her own sons and daughters were persecuted in the land of their nativity. The radical influences of the liberalism of contemporary German thought and of the fanatic sentiments of the French Revolution, and the loss of the democratic character of church life in The Netherlands, by the crown's establishment of the state church on a bureaucratic basis in 1816, developed a spirit of the most reckless free thinking and dead formalism in the churches of The Netherlands. Against these conditions, so destructive of the pure ideals of the olden days, there was a mighty protest which resulted in secession in 1834, and in the establishment of the "Christelijk Afgescheiden Kerk," whose leaders and adherents were persecuted. "They were scattered, harassed, dragonnaded, imprisoned, hounded. The blot of their persecution is ineffaceable."

WHY THE UNITED STATES WAS CHOSEN

Though the persecution gradually ceased and the persecuted church obtained conditional recognition

in 1841, there were instances of official persecution as late as the summer of 1846; and even though official persecution was supposed to be at an end, the members of the seceded church were subjected to continued insult and abuse at the hands of an embittered public. The continued difficulties and complications involved in the religious situation —especially the impossibility of satisfactorily educating their children in the true belief in The Netherlands—and the utter destitution and forbidding prospects of so many, due to the extremely hard times then being experienced there and to the dark economic and political outlook, led to a strong agitation for emigration among the persecuted churches. It is significant of the spirit of this whole movement that the prospective emigrants especially desired to go to Java where conditions for colonization were unusually desirable and where they might exert a civilizing and a missionary influence upon the natives. A petition to the government for free land there on condition of religious liberty was not granted. The alternative was the United States. The favorable reports of delegates from their own number who had been sent to America to investigate the advisability of colonization there and the sympathy and pledges of aid expressed in special letters of encouragement and invitation by friends in the Dutch Reformed Church in the United States led to the general decision to emigrate thither. During the summer and fall of 1846 meetings were held, plans formulated, and preparations for departure made.

In September Albertus Christiaan Van Raalte, an enthusiastic young minister of the secession, sailed from Rotterdam for New York with his family and forty-seven followers. Five ships carried more emigrants to follow him in the spring of 1847. A body of prospective colonists in the province of Zeeland completed a church organization, called Cornelius Van Der Meulen to be their pastor-leader, and sailed in the spring of 1847. A party of Vriesland ers also sailed about the same time under the leadership of a clergyman, Martin Ypma. Having received an encouraging letter from Dr. Thomas De Witt of New York, Hendrick Peter Scholte, a radically independent clergyman who had been closely identified with the secession, and his followers held a meeting at Utrecht, where an organization for colonization purposes was effected, an agreement drawn up, and an executive board appointed; this party, which numbered between eight hundred and nine hundred, also sailed in the spring of 1847. Thus was begun an emigration from The Netherlands to the United States which was to develop into a considerable movement, and which, though it has long since abated and changed altogether in aspect and spirit, has not yet ceased. The early emigrants came from the lower middle class and were principally farmers and followers of the various trades, "mostly persecuted Free Church members." "The movement runs in many respects parallel to the Puritan emigration of 1620." It has been seen that the whole undertaking was religious in origin.

And this religious spirit was the bone and marrow, not only of the emigration, but of the whole establishment and slow growth of their early settlements. Doctor Dosker has stated the purpose of the early settlers as material betterment, but primarily spiritual development. And all their plans and achievements must be estimated, as they were by the Hollanders themselves, on a religious basis. How genuine this spirit was their history shows.

WHY THE DUTCH WENT TO MICHIGAN

Van Raalte and his party landed in New York in November, 1846. They were warmly welcomed and substantially befriended by their friends in the Dutch Reformed Church. Without reaching a decision as to their ultimate destination, the immigrants started for the west. After a personal tour of investigation through western Michigan Van Raalte returned to Detroit in the vicinity of which he had left his party, and led them through Allegan, where the women save one were to remain till spring, to the head of Black Lake, southwestern Ottawa County, the site of the city of Holland. They reached their destination late in February, 1847.

The reasons that led to the choice of southern Ottawa County are best rendered in Van Raalte's own words:

"Although the Americans recommended the localities near rivers and in general deemed it too great a hazard to settle here, ... the combination of so many advantages, although they could be but slowly developed at first, left me no doubt as to

what my duty was . . . . . I knew that the country near Lake Michigan was protected from severe frosts, and pre-eminently a region for fruit. I could find no other place where as here, along the inhabited rivers lined with manufacturies and mills, the tens of thousands could find work without danger of being scattered, and where, at the same time, we could be certain of the opportunity to secure land continually without any interference for a group of settlements. I chose this region with such decision because of its great variety, being assured that if the Dutch migration should develop into a power, we ought to remain together for mutual support, and ought to have this variety for capital and labor, especially for future growth. My object in settling between the Kalamazoo and Grand rivers was to secure the advantages of both—for we could not get along without the settled regions—and at the same time to establish a center for a united and spiritual life and labor for God's kingdom."

These words reveal the dream of the leaders in Michigan—colonization on a large scale, "with towns, churches, and schools."

THE BEGINNING OF THE FIRST COLONY

It is a far cry from the uneventful, thoroughly circumscribed life of the peasantry of so highly civilized a European center as The Netherlands to the vicissitudes of American pioneerhood which demand so much resourcefulness, self-reliance, and knowledge of woodcraft. In 1847 the only appreciable settlements between the western Grand and Kalamazoo rivers were Grand Haven, the headquarters of some twenty trading posts of the Ameri-

can Fur Company, and Grand Rapids, a bustling village, both on the former river, and Saugatuck and Allegan, two little towns on the Kalamazoo. Between these rivers and near the head of Black Lake, the outlet of a small stream, the Dutch, under Van Raalte, settled in close proximity to a band of the Ottawa Indians. So ignorant of pioneer ways were the first settlers that a party of Americans from Allegan came to teach them "how to chop trees, build log houses, and make roads, many of them not even knowing how to connect the ax with the helve." Their strange environment was rendered still stranger by their ignorance of the language. Their first quarters were in a rude Indian church in charge of a missionary, George Nelson Smith. He and Isaac Fairbanks, a government agent to the Indians, were about the only white men near them and opened their own homes to the Dutch and did them a great service in teaching them the rudiments of frontier life. The first work of the colonists was the building of two log sheds for their shelter and the opening of a road to the head of Black Lake. This was accomplished during a winter that was unusually severe and in snow that is said to have averaged more than two feet in depth. With spring and summer came the great influx of colonists. A party of about one hundred reached the site of the present town of Holland from St. Louis in March after having decided to settle in Michigan instead of Iowa. The always scanty food supply of the little settlement was sorely taxed to furnish the constantly increasing number of colonists with the barest

necessities of life. A large part of the provisions were at first brought in from Allegan. But there was little money with which to buy supplies, and at the earliest opportunity many left for other places. All the old Indian clearings within fifteen miles were systematically cultivated and their yield of corn, potatoes, and buckwheat was carried in by the settlers.

THE FIRST LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Another peculiar difficulty that confronted the colonists was their lack of citizenship. Occasions rose that demanded united action; but these could not in the first years be met as they were in other American communities—through township and other local government. They therefore organized themselves into what they called the "Volksvergadering," made up of the heads of families. In its meetings matters of general interest were discussed. By its action roads and bridges were built, colony provisions procured, orphans and the poor cared for, and newly arrived immigrants sheltered and fed; it also settled personal grievances, regulated labor and wages, and looked after church and school interests. Thus, under the supervision of the "Volksvergadering," the proceeds from the sale of lots in the village of Holland which was platted in the fall of 1847 went to defray the expenses of taxes and payments on colony lands, of doctors' and teachers' fees, of the "dominie's" salary, of the support of the poor, and of church and school building. Known largely through the reminiscences

of old settlers still among us the stately old "Volksvergadering" has for the children of the third and fourth generations something of that patriarchal dignity that invests Whittier's Abraham Davenport.

THE COMING OF THE SECOND SETTLERS

The Zeelanders under Van Der Meulen reached the city of Holland in July, 1847. They had been extended the same friendly welcome and aid in the east as Van Raalte's party. Several sheds had been built near the head of the lake for their accommodation by the neighboring settlers of Holland in which they lived for several weeks. After investigation of the surrounding country they settled on the site of Zeeland. Jannes Van De Luyster, "the proprietor of the village of Zeeland, bought of the government section nineteen" upon which the city has been mostly built. "He also bought section seventeen which was mainly settled by his children and the peasantry of his estate in the old country." It has been seen that these Zeelanders organized themselves into a regular Reformed congregation, having duly elected their consistory and called their pastor before they left The Netherlands, and that thus they came to this country as a church—"so far as known, the only instance of this kind since the landing of the Pilgrim fathers in New England."

The problem of food supply for the increasing population during the approaching winter became so serious that all the settlers of the colony, *i. e.*,

of all the settlements and Holland colonists in these parts, met and effected a provisional organization to deal with the situation. A committee was appointed and sent east to buy provisions and supplies. These were to be shipped in at once and sold to the people in a "colony store" erected for the purpose. With the proceeds food was again purchased for the colony. The greater part of the provisions never arrived till spring, and so one of the principal benefits intended was not realized. The "colony store" and the "colony ship" which was purchased about the same time were soon disposed of.

THE FIRST TRAGEDY OVERTAKES THE PIONEERS

A change of climate and habitat is generally attended, in cases of extensive migration, with increased sickness and a higher death rate. The comparative severity of the cold and heat, the undrained marshes and malarious atmosphere, unwholesome food, insufficient shelter, lack of knowledge in the treatment of the diseases resulting from these conditions, lack of physicians—there being only one among them—all produced terrible suffering and an awful mortality among the early settlers. Eight of the little handful of pioneers with Van Raalte died before the spring of 1847. The Michigan summer with its sudden and extreme changes brought increased suffering. Van Raalte has vividly described the tragic situation. "In the latter part of that first summer our trials reached their climax, for the whole colony became one bed of sickness. Physicians were summoned from outside and paid

out of the colony funds. Never was I nearer the point of despair than when I entered those crowded huts and saw the constant mingling of household duties amid sickness and death, and the dressing of corpses in those huts where each family was forced to accommodate itself to a limited space of a few square feet. No wonder that we could notice an increase of despairing indifference in that hour of sore affliction." So great was the mortality that although many of the orphans who were thus left bereft were immediately taken by other families; their continual increase demanded special action, which resulted in the erection of a building which was intended to be used as an orphanage, but which later became the cradle of Hope College.

OTHER DUTCH SETTLEMENTS WHICH FOLLOWED

So were founded the principal Dutch settlements in Michigan. There were, however, other settlements. The settlers of Vriesland under Ypma and of Overisel under Bolks named their respective colonies after their native provinces in the old country. So did the pioneers of Graafschap under Klyn. Immigrants from the same province generally clustered together and named their settlement after the place or province whence they hailed. So there are North Holland, New Gronnigen, Noordeloos, Drenthe, Zutphen, Borculo, Hardewijk, and others. From the time of their coming the colonists spread around their settlements and located in the country, and have gradually taken possession of lower Ottawa and upper Allegan Counties as well as occupying

other localities. In a letter written in October, 1847, Van Der Meulen estimated the population of the colony at 2,000. The census of 1850 returns 2,542 Dutch-born persons for Michigan—practically all of whom, of course, lived in the colony. Many of the early settlers, on account of destitution, the trials and hardships of pioneer life, and incapacity or dislike for agricultural and frontier pursuits withdrew to the cities and settled districts—some to remain, others to return in better days. Thus there were early large Dutch elements in the population of Muskegon, Grand Haven, Grand Rapids, and Kalamazoo, and smaller clusters in many other communities.

THE LITTLE CITY OF HOLLAND IN ASHES

And so slowly but surely the colonists from The Netherlands gained a foothold in the forest fastnesses of Michigan, till on the eve of their quarter centennial celebration they could point with pride to the little city of Holland, which was just lifting its head from its long struggle with the wilderness. But they were destined to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of their settlement in sackcloth and ashes. Forest fires had always been a threatening menace to the colonists. On October 9, 1871, after an unusually dry season, a veritable hurricane drove the forest fires that were raging fiercely in the vicinity down upon the defenceless city of Holland. In spite of the heroic efforts of the citizens, nearly the whole city was wiped out. One life was lost, $900,000 worth of property destroyed, and the

population, both of the city and its devastated vicinity reduced to poverty and utter destitution. Only the generous aid that was given from all quarters prevented extreme suffering during the following winter. Though "in two hours the labors of a generation were destroyed, hundreds of families rendered homeless, and many a worthy old settler in the evening of a well-spent life left in straightened circumstances from which he was never able to recover," yet the spirit of the men and women who bore the loss and faced the task of the future is expressed in Van Raalte's words the day after the fire—"with our Dutch tenacity and American experience Holland will be rebuilt." The old things had been done away; a greater and better Holland has risen. The long fight with the wilderness may be said to have culminated in the Holland fire. It was the death struggle of a fallen Goliath. The era of establishment was past; the era of development was at hand.

THE MAN WHO LED THE COLONISTS

In this connection it is only natural to turn to the man who led the people through this wilderness. Van Raalte, who was responsible for the choice of the locality which the Dutch in Michigan have made their own, was early marked as a man of power during the persecution in the old country. "The picture reveals the man. Short of stature, with a forehead indicating unusual brain power, deep lines of thought furrowing it; bright eagle eyes glowing with enthusiasm or sparkling with ominous fire

when he was deeply agitated; his smile a revelation; benign at all times, and again full of satire; his firm lips indicative of decision and tenacity of purpose." His boundless optimism in the adversities of the emigration and colonization, his wise and inspiring leadership, the versatility of his talents and services, his broad and unselfish outlook, his devotion to the people, and his life of self-denial are best learned from the now prophetic, now sympathetic, now admonitory words of his addresses and from the lips of those few remaining men and women who lived with him those early days. His noble aspirations and the high ideals that he held up to all the people, the broad lines and sound plans upon which he based the foundations for the establishment of an extensive Dutch community in Michigan, the superior development and achievements of the descendants of the Dutch among whom he moved, his deep interest and personal efforts in the founding and establishment of other Dutch colonies in the west, and the large influence that his life and plans have had upon the Dutch throughout the western states make Van Raalte easily the central figure in the history of the Dutch in the west of the United States.

THE MAN WHO HELPED VAN RAALTE

A leader without whose complementary talents much of Van Raalte's best work might have failed to bear such rich fruit was Van Der Meulen, the pastor of the Zeeland colonists. "Next to Doctor Van Raalte this man was the most important leader of the immi-

grants. A man of less learning than the other, but of that subtle knowledge of human nature and singular tact of leadership which made him the idol of many, the friend of all, the foe of everything which threatened the colony's success. He was pre-eminently a man of men, reading a man's mind with unwonted keenness, jovial and sincere in his associations with men, a man of decision and power, of strong principles and healthy views." "Poor as any other of the settlers, and with a family to support, he was at once minister, doctor, prospector, and judge. When, worn and tired and discouraged, the colonists came out of the woods from different directions on Sabbath mornings, the old saint of God would preach to them with a pathos and a fervid eloquence now seldom heard, and would send them back in the evening to their humble cabins with new courage, brighter hope, loftier purpose, and more unfaltering trust to renew the struggle in the forest and hew out a home and competence." Their statesmanlike insight as displayed in their vital grasp of the basic essentials for the establishment of a sound commonwealth and for the maintenance of a vigorous Christianity and the peculiar harmony of their views and labors have been an incalculable blessing, and to the Dutch in Michigan the names of Cornelius Van Der Meulen and Albertus Christiaan Van Raalte will always be inseparable.

Jannes Van De Luyster of Zeeland was one of the bulwarks of the colony in its early days and is the leading representative of those few among the Michigan immigrants who were not poor. A man

of considerable means and wide public interest in The Netherlands, he was an active factor in the secession and an ardent promoter of the emigration in his locality and is said to have been instrumental in persuading Van Der Meulen to come to this country. Having disposed of his estate, he secured passage and provided for the other material wants of many whose poverty would otherwise have prevented them from becoming immigrants—mostly tenants from his estate. In America it has been seen that he used his means for the public good. He gave land to several poor settlers, from some of whom he never received any return for his benefactions. Thus he is said to have aided seventy-seven of the early pioneers. Martin Ypma of Vriesland and Seine Bolks of Overisel were also pastor-leaders who strengthened the colony in the early hardships and trials.

THE DUTCH WHO WENT TO IOWA

The party of immigrants who had organized under Scholte arrived at Baltimore about May 1, 1847, where they were met by their leader who had preceded them. It was decided to settle in Iowa, and the immigrants proceeded to St. Louis, where they remained while a committee was sent to secure a suitable location for the establishment of a colony in Iowa. Scholte's reasons for not joining Van Raalte in Michigan were the extreme northerly situation of that colony, the poor transportation facilities thither, its lack of open fields, and the difficulties of forest pioneering, its proximity to the

Indians and comparative separation from other settlements, and letters from delegates sent ahead which advised the choice of Iowa over Michigan. When the committee had chosen the present site of Pella, Marion County, in southern central Iowa under the guidance of a missionary, M. J. Post, the people went to Keokuk by boat and thence they went to their future home by wagon and on foot. They reached their destination and went into camp during August and September, 1847. Since no brick or sawed wood were obtainable, they spent the first winter, which proved to be a mild one, in dugouts.

As an organization the colonists purchased about 18,000 acres of land in this vicinity, of which individuals bought parcels for homes and farms as their means allowed; a site for a city was set apart and here Pella was laid out. In answer to their petition to the legislature the Dutch were early allowed township organization and they held their first local election in April, 1848. Several of their number had succumbed to the hardships of the immigration and settlement. But the suffering was probably the greatest during the second winter when the snow remained from November till May. The cold continued for many weeks at twenty below with snow three feet deep; no preparations for these severities had been made since the mild weather of the first winter had been judged normal for America. Many of the settlers were not farmers and consequently met with little success in their labors; there was, moreover, no suitable market for their

products. All these conditions produced great want and poverty. The outlook was so dark that many began to think seriously of locating elsewhere.

The rush to the gold fields of California brought the first relief to the Dutch around Pella. One of the routes westward traversed their settlement, and the fabulous prices paid by the frantic gold seekers for animals, food, and other necessities of the hazardous journey through the far west brought partial relief to the colonists. Thus were laid the foundations for the development of that prosperous colony in Marion County which the Dutch planted. The census of 1850 returned 1008 persons of Dutch birth for Iowa—almost all in the Pella colony. It was then about one-half as large as the settlement at Holland, Michigan.

THE DOMINANT SPIRIT OF THE PELLA COLONY

Scholte was the dominant spirit of the Pella colony. He "had in his following the flower of the Dutch emigration of that period." Although he and his people did not have the material obstacles to overcome that confronted their compatriots in Michigan and although they were financially and perhaps intellectually better prepared to meet them, they endured their many hardships and afflictions with equal fortitude. Scholte possessed almost all the qualifications of a good leader, and deserves much of the credit for the successful establishment of the settlement. On the other hand, "Scholte, who occupied a decidedly independent standpoint in church relations, cannot be said to have been successful

in developing a larger sphere of Christian activity or employing the liberty whose most determined champion he had been and which he here obtained, for a permanently useful purpose. He died unconnected with any existing denomination after he had seen nearly all his disciples, tired of their aimless condition, in a satisfactory connection with the Reformed Church." But the Dutch settlers of the west will always remember him as a "head figure of the group of men who in 1834 fanned into flame the smouldering coals in The Netherlands," and as a leader who was second to none in bringing to pass that relief from petty persecution and hopeless destitution that was the glory of the emigration.

THE DUTCH SETTLERS IN WISCONSIN

Before 1847 three young men from the province of Gelderland in The Netherlands came to America to seek their fortunes. After a short sojourn among the few Hollanders in western New York, they proceeded to Chicago and thence they pushed northward till they reached the present site of Alto in southern Fondulac County, Wisconsin, where they settled. Their letters to friends in The Netherlands led some of the early immigrants to come to Wisconsin and establish the settlement at Alto and to colonize at Cedar Grove in Sheboygan County about the same time. G. Baay at Alto and P. Zonne at Cedar Grove were the early pastors of the Dutch in Wisconsin. Immigrants from these various parties which came through Milwaukee remained and established a Dutch center in that city. The experiences of the

Wisconsin immigrants were much the same as those of their countrymen in Michigan and Iowa. According to the census of 1850 there were 1,157 persons born in The Netherlands in Wisconsin, so that these colonies were about the same size as the settlement in Iowa.

A few scattered Dutch were also to be found in Chicago in 1847. In 1849 Peter De Jong with his own family and twelve other families came to the rich farming lands a little south of the city, then called "High Prairie," now the suburb Roseland of Chicago. The same forbidding economic and social outlook in The Netherlands that induced them to emigrate led many others to follow them to the place where they had settled. Besides the substantial colony at Roseland, South Holland, a few miles south of Roseland, then known as "Low Prairie," was settled about the same time. In 1850 there were 220 persons born in The Netherlands in Illinois. These colonists were favored and their descendants have prospered by their proximity to Chicago.

THE SETTLERS WHO WENT FARTHER WEST

It will now be necessary to review those migratory movements of the western Dutch which have spread them south into Texas, north into Canada, and west to the coast. As the old centers in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa became more thickly settled, the unusual agricultural opportunities offered in various localities throughout the western states resulted in the migration of large numbers of the

younger Dutch to new fields of promise. After considerable discussion among the Dutch in the Pella colony a committee was sent to northwestern Iowa to investigate the suitability of location there. When they returned to recommend settlement in the Cherokee region these lands were pre-empted by others. The committee finally discovered still richer lands in Sioux County and at once secured these for the location of a colony. The first settlers of this colony located on and near the site of Orange City in 1869 and 1870. Although this was a Pella colony, there were also settlers from Wisconsin and Michigan. The surrounding country was infested with unscrupulous land agents and speculators who lost no opportunity to annoy the Dutch. The situation reached a crisis when, in the winter of 1871–72, the county board refused to approve the bonds offered by certain county officers elected by the Dutch element. After repeated futile attempts at persuasion a party of the Dutch settlers went to Calliope, the county seat, and seized the county documents and safe, to remove which they were compelled to cut a hole in the wall of the courthouse, and took all with them on their sleds to Orange City, which they eventually made the county seat. This colony also suffered much from blizzards, cyclones, prairie fires, and especially from the grasshoppers which practically consumed all the crops during several seasons of the seventies and against which no adequate protection could be taken.

Henry Hospers and Seine Bolks, who was early called from Michigan to be the minister of these

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colonists, may be mentioned among the prominent leaders in the establishment and development of this colony. There are also Dutch settlements in Wright, Grundy, Hardin, Plymouth, and Muscatine Counties in this state.

WHERE THE DUTCH HAVE COME IN AMERICA

The Dutch community in South Lancaster County, Nebraska, was settled by colonists from Michigan and Wisconsin in 1868 and the few following years. There are also small clusters of the Dutch settlers in central and western Kansas, whose pioneers came principally from Michigan. These are agricultural communities. Great privations were endured by the settlers in these states through prairie fires and grasshoppers, but they are now mostly prosperous farmers. Van Raalte was partly responsible for and deeply interested in the establishment of Dutch communities in these states. In 1881 and the few succeeding years colonists from Sioux County and from Pella in Iowa pushed westward into South Dakota and located on the site of Harrison in Douglas County and in the vicinity of Platte in Charles Mix County. These settlements were strengthened by arrivals from other Dutch centers and by direct immigration from The Netherlands. They met with heavy losses from drought and from prairie fires, which left many without any means of sustenance and compelled them to leave. These colonies have since been substantially developed. There are also settlements in Bon Homme, Turner, Brookings, and Deuel Counties, and in Emmons County in North

Dakota. The Dutch are also found as far north as Jamestown and the Devil's Lake region in the latter state.

Colonists from Wisconsin also went to southeastern Minnesota and settled in Fillmore County about the same time that the Dutch settlers went to Nebraska. Others coming up from the Sioux County colony and from South Dakota went into Nobles and Kandeyohi Counties and up north of St. Paul. They branched eastward towards Duluth into Pine County and westward from St. Paul into Wright and Norman Counties and even into the Dakotas. Coming principally from Iowa and South Dakota, Hollanders also went to Montana and located near Manhattan and Billings. A few went on to Washington.

In the nineties a considerable number of Dutch settlers from Sioux County and other Dutch centers settled in clusters in Washington. They are chiefly found in the Whitby Island region and around North Yakima. Recently the Dutch have crossed the line and taken up lands in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. A few of the colonization projects of the Dutch have been failures; perhaps the best known of these was the ill-fated venture in Virginia in which Van Raalte was so deeply interested.

THE TOTAL DUTCH IN AMERICA

When the early immigrants reached this country, they left many of their number in the various cities and localities through which they passed. And the migrations of their descendants have left traces of the Dutch almost everywhere. Thus they are found

scattered through New York, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, northern Kentucky, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, near Galveston, and in the Pan Handle district in Texas, Utah, Colorado, and California. In fact, there are Dutch in every state and territory of the Union to-day. Of the 105,098 persons born in The Netherlands in this country in 1900 a little over 83,500 were found west of the Atlantic states, with 30,406 in Michigan, 21,916 in Illinois, 9,388 in Iowa, 6,496 in Wisconsin, about 3,400 in Ohio and Indiana, and about 9,400 in the Dakotas, Minnesota, Montana, Washington, California, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, and Mississippi. This leaves about 2,700 scattered through the rest of the west and south. There have been more than 30,000 immigrants from The Netherlands since 1900, most of whom it is safe to conclude have come west. Just as in 1850 more than one-half of the 9,848 persons in this country born in The Netherlands were found in Iowa and the north central states, so to-day this same district holds most of the Dutch in the United States.

It is unfortunately impossible to estimate even approximately the number of persons of Dutch descent in the west; for, after all, it is the Dutch American and not the Dutch immigrant of later years who gives standing to the Dutch in the west. From this outline of their settlements here and from this hasty review of their larger migrations it will now be necessary to proceed to an evaluation of the immigrant and the Dutch American in the west.

The frequent migrations in the west are explained by the agricultural propensity of the Dutch. Their struggle in clearing the land and raising an adequate food supply for the ever-swelling population, the fact that a great many of them were farmers, and, especially in Iowa and other western states, the unusual opportunities offered along agricultural lines, conduced to confine the activities of the early Dutch to the soil. And though later years have seen them more variously engaged, the Dutch have always remained pre-eminently an agricultural people. While there has been no marked specialization among the farmers in Michigan, one-tenth of the pickle growers of the H. J. Heinz Company are found among the Dutch of western Michigan, and one of its largest branch factories is located at Holland, Michigan. Besides producing their share of the beet sugar of Michigan and enjoying all the advantages of its famous fruit belt, they are extensively engaged in dairying, which is highly profitable through their system of locally owned creameries. The culture of the celery for which Kalamazoo has become so famous is almost exclusively in the hands of the Dutch farmers in that vicinity. Considerable celery is also raised on the limited lowlands south of Zeeland and through the Vriesland swamp. The progressiveness of the Dutch farmer is illustrated in the association formed by these celery growers, through the agency of which they secure the best terms in commissions and transportation and an intelligent regulation of market supply. Their

celery is the choice quotation in the Chicago market each winter. The income from specialties such as these almost more than from their regular crops brings in considerable money from outside sources. These conditions, together with the thrift and frugality that characterize the Dutch, have established in their communities in western Michigan a state of prosperity with the minimum of fluctuation and a business vigor and financial soundness that would be hard to surpass.

WHAT THE DUTCH HAVE DONE IN IOWA

It is in the Sioux County colony in Iowa that the typical Dutch farmer has been developed. His motto is to farm well and to buy more land. He owns his quarter or half section as his Michigan brother owns his eighty acres. Very many hold much more than this and own farms and lands in other states as well. Enjoying the superior advantages of the rich prairie lands he has applied modern scientific methods to the raising of corn on an extensive scale, for which the country is best adapted and which is his largest crop; stockraising and dairying, however, are also well developed. Nowhere in northwestern Iowa is land so valuable as in Sioux County. The extensive scale of their operations, the easy circumstances of the people, and the general and remarkable prosperity of their communities prove the Dutch in Iowa not only the best farmers among all the Dutch, but among the best in the United States. They occupy around Pella and in Sioux County two of the soundest little

countrysides in the land. Practically all the Dutch in the west are farmers and are of the same type. Their desire to secure the best opportunities and advantages along agricultural lines led to their scattering to the various localities where they are found to-day. And with a very few exceptions they have successfully established themselves wherever they have gone. The Dutch of Wisconsin, those who took up the rich lands in Roseland and South Holland—some of which have become a part of the city of Chicago—and the settlers in Minnesota, the Dakotas, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and Washington have profited most by the rise in land values.

THE INDUSTRIES INTO WHICH THE DUTCH HAVE COME

The extreme poverty of the early Dutch settlers undoubtedly retarded their industrial and commercial development. The pioneers in Michigan located in a fair lumbering region, but their lack of means and the struggle for food precluded the investment necessary for the development of that industry. They no sooner gained a sound foothold, however, than they became industrially active. It has been seen that many of the early Dutch remained in or drifted to the cities. An illustration of what the Dutch of this class have done is to be found in the large wholesale and retail drygoods business built up by the late Paul Steketee and his sons at Grand Rapids. The Dutch are to be found among the business men of many of the cities in the north central group of states. Since in the communities peculiarly their own the Dutch have not founded any large

cities, their commercial interests have never been of metropolitan scope. Their most important centers—the cities of Holland, with a population of fully 10,000, and Zeeland, with a population of about 2,000—have developed a strong interest in the manufacture of furniture, of which the neighboring city of Grand Rapids is the world center. They divide about a dozen furniture factories between them—among them one of the largest hall-clock manufactories in the northwest.

As representative of the commercial institutions which the Dutch have developed in their own communities may be mentioned the Zeeland Brick Company, which has been making brick every year since and including 1848. The business was begun on a small scale, and was gradually developed by the late B. J. Veneklasen, who later took his seven sons into partnership. The company now operates five brickyards and has developed into the largest industry of its kind in the state. In the spring of 1857 Isaac Cappon and John Bertsch started a tannery on the shore of Black Lake at Holland. Their little venture prospered and has expanded into The Cappon and Bertsch Leather Company, capitalized at $800,000—the largest concern of its kind in Michigan. For his honest success, public spirit, and sterling character the late Isaac Cappon may well stand as the typical Dutch American business man. The commercial enterprise of the Dutch residents of Holland is further evidenced in their improvement of Black Lake into Holland harbor, one of the most important east coast ports of Lake

Michigan, both as a commercial and resort center. This development has been attained through long and arduous labors beginning with Van Raalte's request for a congressional appropriation in 1848. So far as known the Dutch in the west have never produced a millionaire. On the other hand, it would be hard to find a community where so little poverty exists as among them. The distribution of wealth among the various classes and the factors of production in their communities approach as close to the economic ideal as in any real community of to-day. The Dutch laborer and craftsman has always proved himself able to withstand any competition and to gain a foothold anywhere; this is undoubtedly due to his reliability, industry, and high morality as much as to his technical ability.

DUTCHMEN WHO HAVE "MADE GOOD"

One historian of Michigan says of its Hollanders that "they can be found in almost every walk in life near the top rung of the ladder." Cyrenus Cole of the "Cedar Rapids Republican" and M. H. De Young, proprietor of the "San Francisco Chronicle," are prominent representatives of many of Dutch descent who are interested in American journalism. Of the twenty-one Dutch papers in the United States, seventeen are published in the west—ten in Michigan and seven in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois. A number of the leading physicians and surgeons of southwestern Michigan are Dutchmen. The "Courthouse War" of Sioux County, of

which mention has been made, is but one instance of many that could be introduced to show that in at least one characteristic the Dutch resemble the Hoosiers. Captain Van Sant, ex-governor of Minnesota, claims Holland descent. George Birkhoff, Jr., besides being a prominent real estate man of Chicago, is consul general of The Netherlands in this country. Gerrit J. Diekema, congressman and a member of one of the strongest legal firms in the state, was a member of the Spanish Treaty Claims Commission after the late war, and has been speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives and for several years chairman of the Republican State Central Committee. The late Gov. Frank Steunenberg of Idaho met a martyr's death at the hands of a cowardly assassin. Col. Cornelius Gardener, U. S. A., who served with distinction during the late war with Spain, has been the governor of Tayabas, Luzon, P. I., and is "known as having made the first true report of atrocities in the Philippines." The western Dutch have produced more men of the cloth and of the cap and gown than of all other professions together. Dr. H. E. Dosker, of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Kentucky, an author and a writer on theological topics, and Dr. G. Vos, of Princeton Theological Seminary, are representative Reformed divines. Presidents B. H. Kroeze, of Whitworth College, G. J. Kollen, of Hope College, and J. S. Nollen, of Lake Forest College, and Drs. H. Keppel, of the University of Florida, and formerly of Northwestern University, and G. Droppers, ex-president of the University of South Dakota

and formerly of the Tokyo University of Japan, are a few prominent representatives of the host of Dutch engaged in educational work. Dr. J. A. Otte, by his services in the establishment and development of the hospitals of the Amoy Mission of the Reformed Church in China, has shown himself a man of unusual professional and executive ability. Dr. S. M. Zwemer, F. R. G. S., besides being an extensive author and lecturer on Arabia, Mohammedanism, and missionary topics in general, is considered the greatest living authority on Arabia. These two men are among the leading missionaries of the world. Let these few men of the west stand for the host of Dutch and their descendants who are serving their generation in the various professions. In this connection it is difficult to refrain from claiming Edward Bok, the editor of "The Ladies' Home Journal," born in The Netherlands as he was, to be of the west.

THE DUTCH ADHERENCE TO MORAL STANDARDS

That the Dutch have embraced the highest moral standards will appear only normal after a consideration of their strong religious life. Their innate respect for law and order, their thrift and industry, their comparatively strict Sabbath observance, which always tends to increased social stability, their hostility to the liquor traffic, as shown in the absence of saloons in Zeeland and Holland, and their proverbially high regard for family, church, and state have made them influential elements wherever they have gone in the maintenance of the sound body politic.

The G. A. R. Post at Holland, made up chiefly of Dutch veterans of the Civil War, illustrates the patriotism of the many other Dutch who fought for the Union. If Winston Churchill, in "The Crisis," may praise the thoroughly deserving German immigrants of St. Louis for saving that city to the Union, surely a tribute may here be rendered to those early Dutchmen, many of them still aliens, who, far removed from the scene of strife, answered from their forest homes the call of a President whose words many of them did not understand. While it is true that a fraction of the Dutch have shown themselves clannish, the success of the early leaders who fostered normal Americanization and the history of this people refute any such charge against Dutch-Americans as a class. It must always be remembered that after the early fifties the Dutch came less, and finally not at all, for religious reasons, and that as this motive died away the status of the immigrants did not improve, though they always compare favorably with other contemporary immigrants. Government officials have concluded that "the Dutchman is an intrinsically desirable immigrant. . . . Dutch agriculturists are religious and they will be found a moral class."

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE DUTCH IN AMERICA

It has been seen that the immigration had its origin largely in the religious scruples of the people. They were not driven out by the ferocity of the persecution: they might have remained as did so many of their fellow churchmen. But to gain for themselves

and especially for their children that full and free spiritual development which they held above all else in life they forsook home to enter the wilderness. Naturally, only the sincerest and most courageous of the secessionists who were after the straitest sect of the Calvinists would resort to emigration. So it is to be expected that the religious life of the Dutch in the west has been very vigorous. The fact that their early organizations were on the church basis and that their leaders were, without exception, their pastors, whose decisions in all matters carried almost oracular authority, illustrates the naîve veneration of the pioneers for things religious. There are treasured traditions of inspiring gatherings for worship before their churches were built. The church at Pella was completed in April, 1848. The settlers of Holland built their log church in the summer and fall of 1847. Of the Zeeland colonists we read: "Before any one had a decent house to live in these sturdy men of Puritan mould built a church of hewn timbers, forty by sixty feet, the most substantial and comfortable building in all the settlement." Years afterwards a member of the original party related the following experience to Mr. Gerrit Van Schelven of Holland. Of a summer Sunday morning in the early fifties a few officials of the U. S. Coast Survey landed at the little settlement of Holland, but were not met by its inhabitants. Had they come upon a deserted village? Taking their way eastward along the forest trail, they soon beheld in a little clearing the log church that held all the people, old and young, and there burst upon them the music of the

choral singing in those stately measures of the majestic old Dutch psalms. If classic New England may hold up with pride the Sabbath picture of the fugitive old judge of Charles I rushing through the streets of colonial Hadley to rouse the Puritans, all at church, to the Indian attack, surely, the children of the Puritans of the west may hold in sacred remembrance this little idyl that illumines the piety of the forefathers.

THE COLONISTS GO INTO THE REFORMED CHURCH

While these pioneers were serving God so devoutly in their forest fastnesses influences were at work that were to bring them great benefits. The Dutch Reformed Church in America was, of course, only the church of The Netherlands transplanted to this country when New Amsterdam was settled. The genuine Christian sympathy of its leaders with the men of 1847 was evidenced in their classical resolutions protesting against the persecution, in their urgent invitations, warm welcome, and material aid to the Dutch, and by the continued support they gave the pioneers. Now there were already before 1847 scattered churches of this denomination in the west embraced in the classes of Illinois and Michigan. As early as 1843 the General Synod had recognized the need of definite church and educational aid to these churches, although the lack of a suitably strong western center had prevented action. After the settlement of the Dutch in Michigan all these conditions—the practical identity in the belief and origin of the Dutch and the members of the Dutch

Reformed Church and the church situation in the west—resulted in synodical overtures to the colonists with a view to union. "The rapidly increasing demands of the scattered immigrants, the need of material assistance in evangelistic work and in supplying educational advantages to a coming generation, and the growing desirability of getting upon a stable basis in the development of their church life conduced to make the chief men" favorable to such a union.

After a memorable conference with the representatives of the Michigan churches Dr. Isaac N. Wyckhoff, the Synod's representative at this meeting, returned a report favorable to union, and in 1850 the Michigan churches were received into the Reformed Church in America. Thus was effected a union the mutual benefits of which have been far reaching. Without the substantial and continued support of the east the consistent development of the Dutch element in the west would have been greatly retarded, if possible at all, and their hardships greatly increased. On the other hand, this union "brought new life into the Reformed Church and gave it a foothold in the west." Gradually most of the other early churches in the west also affiliated with this denomination, till to-day one of its four divisions, the Particular Synod of Chicago, with 208 churches and more than 25,000 communicants, is made up chiefly of western Dutch.

A SPLIT IN THE CHURCH LIFE

The union of the early western churches with the Dutch Reformed Church was not so unanimously or

harmoniously effected as might appear. It was claimed that the material aid of the east was the principal purpose of the leaders. "With the increase of numbers there were also brought the differences and disputes of the newly organized churches in The Netherlands . . . . concerning questions of subordinate importance. These differences afterwards grew into dissension which disturbed the peace and somewhat affected the prosperity of the churches, until the elements of hyper-Calvinistic and reactionary tendencies separated themselves to join the more congenial remnant of the True Reformed Dutch Church" which had seceded from the Reformed Church in 1822. This separation took place in 1857. The seceders grew but slowly until 1879, in which year the Anti-Masonic agitation, which was especially warm among the western churches, became prominent. During the few following years they were strengthened by the accession of many influential churches, and since this time the Christian Reformed Church has increased rapidly, largely through direct immigration from The Netherlands. This church embraces the ultra-conservative element among the Dutch. It has built up a strong system of Christian education among its people in its parochial schools. In the west, which forms practically the whole of this denomination, there are 25 of these schools with more than 100 teachers and about 5,500 pupils. They also train their own clergymen in John Calvin Junior College, which they founded at Grand Rapids in 1861, adding a seminary course in 1876 and a general literary course in 1900. The

school is in a prosperous condition, with 11 instructors and about 160 students. The western Dutch comprise eight of the ten classes of this church, with about 100 ministers, 150 churches, and more than 22,000 communicants. They have been estimated as "boundlessly zealous, thoroughly conservative, and a very active factor in the development of the western portion of the Reformed Church-life."

THE SCHOOL FOLLOWS THE CHURCH

That the educational and religious interests of the early settlers were inseparable must have transpired from their purposes and ideals. School was held in the log church at Holland soon after its completion; long before 1850 the children of Zeeland also received instruction; and the same is true for all the surrounding settlements. The ideals of their leaders were voiced in the early agitation for the establishment of a higher institution of learning. Already before the coming of the Dutch the Synod had been petitioned to establish a "seminary, college, and preparatory school in the Mississippi valley" for the development of the churches there, but the project had lain dormant. But now in 1851 under the auspices of the Synod and with the strong support of the east the Michigan colonists founded at Holland the Pioneer School—"that our children may be trained to become carriers of the light of the gospel in the dark places of the earth," since "we are doubly under obligation to preach the gospel to the heathen, because that has been entrusted to us and because God has deemed us worthy to witness in the persecu-

tion in the fatherland." Van Raalte donated the five acres of its original site. Is it strange to hear some one exclaim of the establishment of this school: "The idea of starting an English high school in the wilderness, among a people ignorant of the language and at times struggling for a bare subsistence!" "Truly it was heroism to found a high grade literary institution five years after the first trees of the impenetrable forest had begun to fall."

THE FIRST DUTCH COLLEGE IN AMERICA

In 1857 it became Holland Academy, and in 1866 it was incorporated as Hope College, under which name it has risen to its present rank. To-day it enrolls about 350 students who are taught by a faculty of about 25. More than 350 have been graduated from the college, of whom more than half are ministers and many others are teachers and active in other professions. From its small beginnings this institution has, largely through the ability and activity of President G. J. Kollen, developed into a substantial little college with an endowment exceeding $270,000 and with an equipment of fully $250,000, including a new gymnasium, dormitory, lecture and laboratory building, and observatory, besides its chapel and library and other buildings. In 1869 the Western Theological Seminary was opened at Holland under the auspices of the Synod. The financial embarrassment and great difficulties under which these institutions among the Dutch grew may be learned from the fact that the Seminary was compelled to close its doors from 1877 to 1884. But it must always be

remembered that these institutions are the wards of the Reformed Church, and that without the strong and continued support of the east their development must have been much slower. "It may truthfully be said that the influence of these institutions is to-day felt around the globe." And the full significance of the presence and influence of these institutions among the Dutch of the west is incalculable. As schools of the Reformed Church, the Hollanders have also established the Northwestern Classical Academy at Orange City, Iowa, and similar institutions at Harrison, S. D., German Valley, Illinois, and Cedar Grove, Wisconsin. At Pella the Hollanders were also largely instrumental in the establishment and support of the Central University of Iowa, the original site of which was the donation of Scholte.

THE ARDENT DUTCH MISSIONARY SPIRIT

The ardent missionary spirit of the western Dutch has already become evident. Their general interest is shown in their "Zendingsfeests" or missionary picnics, especially prominent in Iowa. But perhaps the concisest epitome and best illustration of the activities and attitude of the western Dutch is contained in a recently circulated facsimile program of the exercises that attended the "laying of the keel of the new missionary ship at Holland, Michigan, Friday, June 24, 1864." "If missionary zeal be ever made to correspond with the wants of the world and the consecration of believers, it will be evinced not merely by sending forth ordained ministers, but by Christian colonization. This idea has been

embodied in the keel of a missionary ship laid at Holland." This ship was never completed. But in proof of their sincerity of purpose and practicality of achievement the facsimile furnishes fifty names, "the ships that have sailed. A list of the sons and daughters of the emigration who have sailed to foreign shores, most of them graduates of Hope College." It also states the foreign missionary contributions of the Particular Synod of Chicago of the Reformed Church for 1906 as exceeding $49,000. The traditions of these colonies may not conjure up out of a romantic past so picturesque a scene as the rocky New England coast with a "Mayflower" riding at anchor in the hazy offing, but their children's children will tell of that phantom ship "that never was on sea or land," and will point to the fifty and more ships that have sailed to prove the triumph of the spirit of the forefathers who laid the keel. Not the picture of "Old Ironsides" itself stirs nobler sentiments than the recollection of those patriarchal figures that addressed the reverent throng gathered about the keel upon the verdant shore.

* * * *

WITH this hasty review must close a sketch which has of necessity been limited to mere outline and mention of the more important facts and interests of the Dutch of the west. And while to our fellow Americans the old Dutch who have so

long lived in their midst may seem a quaint and lowly people, to us, the children of the emigration, they are in a peculiar sense fathers and mothers in Israel—the Puritan heroes of a faith that would not wane. We owe to them our glory as American citizens. They owe much to America, and the United States owes more than a little to them.

And so it is good for us of the third and fourth generations—but also of cosmopolitan America—to go back home sometimes, and to watch of a summer Sabbath morning the dwindling line of pioneers go up to the house of God. And as we see them pass there may come to us something of that pathos that must have dimmed Van Raalte's eye as he spoke those closing words of his address at the quarter centennial celebration of the colonization, which may so well rest as a benediction upon the history of the Dutch in the west:

"And this sweet fruition of independence and full liberty which we so bountifully enjoyed gave joy and strength to our hearts. Especially was it the pleasure of the Sabbath, the invigorating power of God's truth, and the united prayers and associated labor of many neighboring settlements which gave enjoyment, support, and courage, and caused us to persevere in a great and difficult undertaking. God's temporal deliverances were many: each settlement and each family has a history of its own."

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